

Curriculum Review – *Connect C1*

Published by *Christian Education Publications* ©2010

Connect C1 Infants Teacher's manual ISBN number 978-1-925725-59-9,

Connect C1 Infants Student activity book ISBN number 978-1-925725-60-5

Connect C1 Lower Primary Teacher's manual ISBN number 978-1-925725-61-2

Connect C1 Lower Primary Student activity book ISBN number 978-1-925725-60-5

Connect C1 Upper Primary Teacher's manual ISBN number 978-1-925725-63-6

Connect C1 Upper Primary Student activity book ISBN number 978-1-925725-64-3

Reviewed November 2024. Version 1.

RI Curricula are referred to by the Department of Education Qld as RI Program Materials.



Connect is a three-year Religious Education curriculum designed for use in Australian and New Zealand schools. It is Bible based and offers 20 lessons each semester at infants, lower primary and upper primary levels. The curriculum has as its foundation in the belief, that it is important to allow the Bible's own theological framework to determine what is taught and how it is taught. It is therefore content structured, teaching the major events, concepts and doctrines of the Bible. This curriculum is student related and is designed to engage students' minds and emotions as well as develop the skills needed for students to explore the nature and content of the Christian faith.

The Contemporary English Version (CEV) or the Good News Bible have been used predominantly in Connect because these versions of the Bible consider both the reader and the hearer. It is designed to be read clearly and understood by those not familiar with traditional Bible language.

Executive Summary

In 2019, the Multi-Faiths RI Peak Body Network commissioned an independent review of common curriculum materials used by Religious Instructors in Queensland Schools. The focus of the review was to assist Principals to be confident that curriculum materials comply with Department of Education Queensland policy requirements. This report is a review of the *Connect C1* curriculum materials used by many Christian Religious Instructors, against 15 policy areas of focus. The review purpose and process is outlined in a separate document on the website multifaithsri.org.au.

Outcome:

***Connect C1* is highly compliant with Department of Education Queensland policy.**

The Connect C1 program consists of 20 lessons each based on a particular reading from the Holy Bible. There are two themes, each with ten lessons; "God's great kingdom plan", and "Remember God is King".

The same curriculum themes feature across the 3 age/stage versions. The three age/stage versions are published as separate teacher's manual and student activity books. As the lessons are organised around the same idea and bible concept, the RI Instructor can choose activities that are appropriate for the ages and interests of their groups.

- Infants
- Lower primary
- Upper primary

A comprehensive Teacher's Manual for each level contains information concerning a memory verse, Bible background, information on what the RI Instructor will need to access e.g. music, drama, PowerPoints and PDFs. PDFs are available for free to photocopy from the Teacher's Manual. The manual also contains teaching ideas relevant to classroom management, teaching techniques, teaching aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and understanding the student.

The 3 manuals enable the instructor to choose activities that are appropriate for the ages and interests of their groups, and easily differentiate for student needs.

Each lesson in Connect C1 is supported by a range of resources, videos, songs and PowerPoint materials. Not all these resources were made available to the reviewer. Of the samples provided they are obviously of high quality and designed to assist with the implementation of the lesson and support the aims of the lesson.

Each level in Connect C1, Infant, Lower Primary and Upper Primary, is accompanied by a student activity book. RI Instructors will need to be cognisant of the reading ability of the students across the class. Some of the words and activities will need to be read and clearly explained to the students as many may not have the cognitive ability to read and complete the activities independently.

A lesson-by-lesson analysis and details about any areas of concern and recommendations are provided in this report to support RI Instructors in complying with Department of Education policy.

Reviewer:

Peter Doyle, Retired Department of Education Principal

November 2024

Lesson by Lesson Review

- Reviewed as compliant.
- Reviewers noted that while these activities are compliant, RI instructors would need to take additional care with these activities.
- Reviewers indicated that caution should be exercised and that this lesson or part of the lesson may cause compliance concerns.

- Sections of this lesson were not compliant.
- N/A Not applicable.
- * Updates in new edition have addressed the issues raised.

The codes refer to the Infants manual (i), Lower Primary (LP), and Upper Primary (UP).

Unit	1										2									
Lesson	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1. Appropriate age and lesson time																				
2. Supporting a cooperative arrangement. No leaving of materials																				
3. No proselytizing or promotion of outside school activities and publications																				
4. No activities or content that would cause harm to a child (physical, psychological or emotional well-being)																				
5. Supports and promotes a safe, supportive and disciplined learning environment																				
6. Responds to diverse learning needs – level and age																				
7a. A safe physical and cyber learning environment - supports wellbeing																				
7b. Fosters behavioural strengths																				
7c. Builds positive relationships (peers, staff, parents, community) and promotes positive social interactions																				
7d, e. Encourages inclusivity, diversity																				
8. Safe supportive environment, free from bullying, discrimination, harassment																				
9. Responsive to school behaviour plan, safe supportive and disciplined learning environment																				
10. Smart choices - healthy food and drink																				IP LP UP
11. Consistent with Code of School Behaviour																				
12. Risk - suggests undertaking an assessment and identifies where risk assessment is needed																				
13. Promotes responsible care and use of animals																				
14. Does not include activities using items that may cause allergic reactions																				IP LP UP
15. Supports effective communication between students, parents communities that is inclusive and valued																				

Review Commentary

Strengths

- a. **The lessons all have suggestions for learning activities that involve students.**
 - a. Activities are suggested for students to engage in craft activities, songs.
 - b. Little writing is required from students in the optional activities. Most responses required are verbal and auditory.
 - c. Some lessons require the RI Instructor to read aloud the lesson and initiate a discussion with students.
 - d. No food is shared in the lessons.
 - e. No live animals are required in the presentation of lessons.
 - f. All lessons are planned for an indoor classroom. It is important that RI Instructors liaise with the class teacher, prior to the lesson, as to any arrangements which need to be made to facilitate the lesson.
 - g. Little organisation is required. RI Instructors will need access to the class overhead projector or a smart screen television to project the video. To reduce the possibility of accidents while the students are engaged in movement activities it will be necessary to ensure that the learning space is clear of furniture and teaching resources e.g. blocks, toys, and books. The usual resources that students would have and regularly use in their classrooms such as glue, scissors, pencils, crayons should be freely available.
 - h. The Teacher's Manual is well organised and comprehensive. It contains a wide range of valuable tips and suggestions.
- b. Connect C1 draws, among other things, on the educational research of Howard Gardner from Harvard University. Connect offers a range of supplementary learning activities with each lesson. An icon indicates the dominant intelligence and the types of learning it entails. These include word, music, mathematics and logic, body, space and vision, self, interpersonal, and nature.

Considerations

- **Teacher's Manual.** It is important that Instructors read the lesson in the teacher's manual prior to the lesson and familiarise themselves with the content, and of any additional preparation required e.g. a prayer. An outline of each lesson can be found in the Connect C1 Teacher's Manual.
- **Lesson Space** As lessons involve songs and dance the learning space should be cleared of furniture and be large enough for the students to move about when singing.
- **Ability of Students.** In some lessons the students are asked to write an answer, in the form of prose. In lesson 11 students are asked to write an answer to the question, "What does real wisdom look like?"
- Not all students will have acquired the same level of drawing, reading, speaking and, writing, skills. RI Instructors need to be aware of this to cater for individual differences and abilities.
- There are two special lessons throughout the year. The first, is an Easter assembly. While there is no mention of traditional hot cross buns, or Easter eggs in the lesson the teacher will need to be mindful that food is not distributed in class or at the assembly as there is every chance that a child in the class will have a food allergy to some ingredient E. G. Eggs, milk, gluten. As per the "Smart choices - healthy food and drink supply strategy for Queensland schools"

The second special lesson is forgiveness.

Policy Compliance

The curriculum materials are highly compliant with the 15 policy areas of focus identified in collaboration with the Department of Education policy advisors, drawn from:

- The Education (General Provisions) Act 2006.
- The Department of Education's Safe, Supportive and Disciplined School Environment Procedure
- P-12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework
- Student Learning and Wellbeing Framework
- Inclusive Education Policy
- Statement of expectations for a disciplined school environment
- Smart choices - healthy food and drink supply strategy for Queensland schools
- The Code of School Behaviour
- Managing Risks in School Curriculum Activities
- Animal Use in Queensland state schools
- Smart choices - healthy food and drink supply strategy for Queensland schools
- Parent and Community Engagement framework

Overall Comment from the review team:

Connect C1 is a well-considered resource that aims to provide clear scaffolding and appropriate pedagogies for non-trained teachers (i.e. RI Instructors who are volunteers in school classrooms). The lessons are appropriate for primary school students. The lessons provide ample opportunities for all students to be involved and contribute through discussions, reflections and activities.